



[PROCESS OF THE MONTH]

NETWORKED FOR RAPPORT

Purpose

To create a powerful demonstration to understand the following:

- Inter-relationships needed for collaboration and the achievement of goals.
- Necessity to enhance communication, teamwork and feedback.
- Impact of creating rapport and the behaviors that strengthen relationships.

Background

In his book, *Social Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman states that you are “wired to connect.” In other words, humans have a biological need to be social and to interact. Yet, in today’s business and social environment, you become increasingly dependent on non-personal means of communication and interaction. E-mail, text messages, blogs, video games all allow for quick communication; however, they can also isolate the individual and do not enhance strong personal relationships. It seems the more networked you become, the less connected you really are.

While technology has provided several effective means of communicating and distributing information, the reality is, most people depend on another person in order to accomplish their daily goals. With this in mind, it is essential to acknowledge the value of human relationships and the importance of building rapport to create a foundation of trust, communication, and collaboration in order to get the high level of commitment and personal accountability required to achieve sustainable results.

In this process, you have the opportunity to look closely at the inter-relationships you depend on to achieve your goals. You will examine the strength of the personal relationships you have developed and assess the impact of these on accomplishing your goals. Then you will define what actions you will take to continue to build rapport and further strengthen the relationship even further.

Process

Materials (*per person*)

- Pen/Pencil
- Your organization’s goals for the next 6-12 months
- 1 copy of “**Organization Goals**” worksheet
- 6 copies of “**Connection Survey**” worksheet
- 1 copy of “**Connection Reflection**” worksheet

This process has three segments:

1. Brainstorming
2. Survey
3. Reflection

1 Brainstorming

1. Choose 3 organizational goals that are important to accomplish in the next 6-12 months.
2. Write the goals where indicated on the “**Organizational Goals**” worksheet.
3. Choose one of the three organizational goals to work with first.
4. Identify the people and the departments with which you interact in order to achieve that goal. List these on your worksheet.
5. Review your list and choose one person or one department with which you have a **strong, positive** relationship. Circle the name or the department.
6. If you circled a department in #3 above, identify one person in the department with which you have the strongest positive relationship. Write that person’s name next to the department’s name.
7. Review your list again, however this time look at those individuals or departments with which you have a **challenging** relationship or no relationship at all.

8. Choose one department or individual with which the relationship is the most challenging. Draw a square around the name.
9. If you chose a department, look more closely and identify a person within that department with which a relationship is a challenge. Write that person's name next to the department's name. If you do not know anyone's name, write, "Don't Know Names" next to the department.
10. Repeat steps 4-9 for the remaining 2 goals.
11. You will now have a list of 6 names: 3 people with which you have a strong, positive relationship and 3 people with which you have a challenging relationship or no relationship.

2 Survey

1. Using the "**Connection Survey**" sheets provided, write the names of the individuals you chose above on the survey sheet. Write one name per page.
2. Complete a survey for each person.

3 Reflection

1. Review your survey results.
2. Take note of any trends or consistencies you notice in your responses.
3. Use the "**Connection Reflection**" worksheet to help guide your insights and learning.

Conclusion

Humans are born with the ability to reach out and connect with others. From the time you are an infant, you respond to others first on an emotional level. As you grow older, you draw on your experiences and your rational brain kicks in, yet the emotional part of your brain is still quite active. This part of your brain allows you to "tune in" to others' feelings, to be empathetic. It also influences your own moods and responses.

Regardless of the culture studied, the single most common element of a productive life is nourishing relationships. While enacted differently in different parts of the world, connecting with others is the core feature of "optimal human existence."

When you take the time to learn how to connect and relate to the people around you, you create a world in rapport. And, when you create positive relationships, you actually spread positive feelings to others...it is contagious! While technology and geographic divides may create obstacles to forming relationships, it is a human imperative that you look for more ways to create understanding of one another and overcome those obstacles. At the end of the day, everyone is human and the common element you have is the brain's need to be social...to be connected, at your core.



Organizational Goals

GOAL #1:

People and Departments I depend on to achieve this goal:

GOAL #2:

People and Departments I depend on to achieve this goal:

GOAL #3:

People and Departments I depend on to achieve this goal:



Connection Survey

Name: _____

What I expect from this person:

What they expect from me:

This person's awareness of my needs and expectations:

1 Clueless 3 5 Know exactly

My awareness of their needs and expectations:

1 Clueless 3 5 Know exactly

Our primary form of communication:

1 E-mail 3 Phone 5 Face-to-Face

Our frequency of communication:

1 Never 3 When needed 5 We update each other regularly

The level of understanding I share with this person:

1 Frequent misunderstandings 3 Occasional misunderstandings 5 We seem to complete each other's thoughts

Additional information I know about this person:

1 Nothing 3 Other work priorities 5 Facts about their personal life

My current relationship with this person is: *(circle one)*

Strong Challenging

Connection Reflection

Review the 3 people you have a *strong, positive* relationship with first:

- What did you notice about the strength of your relationship with a person or department and their understanding of your needs and expectations?
- Conversely, what did you notice about the strength of your relationships and your understanding of their needs and expectations?
- How does the form of communication you use affect your ability to understand one another?
- How does the frequency of communication affect your ability to understand one another?
- What impact does the form of communication you use have on your ability to connect with someone personally?
- What is the relationship between the frequency of communication and your personal connection with someone?

Review the 3 people you have a *challenging* relationship with next:

- What did you notice about the strength of your relationship with a person or department and their understanding of your needs and expectations?
- Conversely, what did you notice about the strength of your relationships and your understanding of their needs and expectations?
- How does the form of communication you use affect your ability to understand one another?
- How does the frequency of communication affect your ability to understand one another?
- What impact does the form of communication you use have on your ability to connect with someone personally?
- What is the relationship between the frequency of communication and your personal connection with someone?

Looking at all 6 relationships:

- When you have strong relationship with someone, what is the impact on your frequency and mode of communication? What is the impact on your level of understanding of each other?
- How does this influence your knowledge of this individual as a person? Are you more or less inclined to know someone on a more personal level when you email them or when you speak to them over the phone or face to face?
- What are some of the obstacles facing you with those individuals with which you have a challenging relationship? What options do you have to overcome those obstacles and create connections with each other?
- What is the impact of these inter-relationships on your ability to provide a quality product or outcome?
- How does a positive relationship affect your emotions? How does this emotional stance affect the other people with which you interact? How does having challenging relationships affect you and the people around you?
- Based on the insights that you experienced with this process, what actions will you take to increase the strength of the relationships with those you already have a strong positive relationship?
- What will you do differently to improve the strength of the relationships that are challenging? How will you build connections with them? For example, if you did not even know one person's name in a department, what will you do to get to know someone?